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ABSTRACT

The author suggests three ways which, when considered together, provide an operational definition of the community-based, performance-oriented community college. The first way is through expanded access to further education; the second, creation of a community renewal college; and the third is through a new difinition of the teaching/learning act--competency-based learning systems. (Author)

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"THE COMMUNITY-BASED, PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED COMMUNITY COLLEGE"

by

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Alan Pifer, President of the Carnegie Corporation, speaking at AACJC Convention last February, told the nation's community colleges that they should consider themselves primarily community service agencies, rather than institutions of higher education. He cast the community college in a key leadership role for reconstruction of American society. "Other institutions have a part to play, of course," he said, "but I see the community college as the essential leadership agency. . . .They can become the hub of a network of institutions and community agencies--the high schools, industry, the church, voluntary agencies, youth groups, even the prison system and the courts--utilizing their educational resources and, in turn, becoming a resource for them."

These words are consistent with AACJC's new emphasis on community-based, performance-oriented post-secondary education. With this admonition, I couldn't agree more. But what is meant by this new mission and how can it be accomplished?

I would like to suggest three ways which, when considered together, provide an operational definition of the community-based, performance-oriented community college. The first way is through expanded access to further education. Expanded access will result in a new breed of student, exploding the experts' predictions of

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declining enrollments. People from all walks of life and many different age levels will be enabled to take advantage of almost unlimited learning opportunities designed to fulfill desired, useful needs through a new and unique type of education which might otherwise not be available to them. Why? Because a basic assumption of expanded access is that every person in the community has a right to education beyond the high school level; in a democracy education is not a privilege for the wealthy or for an intellectually elite group.

Doomsday forecasts of declining college enrollment are based on the traditional delivery systems of higher education developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and basically unchanged since. "This system assumes that a college or university is a physical location where students and teachers assemble, and that a college education consists of four years of courses. . ."

Expanded access will create a market considerably larger than what tradition has led us to expect. According to Dr. Edmund Gleazer, Jr., President of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, "within current confines alone, we know that if every 'housewife' took one 'course' every other year, the impact would be an instant tripling of 1972 enrollments. Outside those confines it is mind boggling to think of the market represented by the 'learning force' at large."

Item: The post-war babies now 26 years old will be available for post secondary education through the year 2000.

Item: In only 26 years half the population will be 50 years of age or older.

Item: A recent survey by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education indicated that most adults spend about 700 hours a year at anywhere from one to half-a-dozen "learning projects" outside higher education.

Item: Approximately 11.2 million adults (ages 18-60) exclusive of full-time students are now engaged in learning experiences sponsored by non-educational institutions such as labor unions, private industry, museums, professional trade associations and governmental agencies. A number larger than all students now enrolled in colleges and universities.

Zero education growth? Hardly.

In the past, expanded access to higher education has meant allowing greater numbers of persons in the 18 to 24 year old age group to attend college. In the future, according to a February, 1973 report of The Joint Committee on the California Master Plan for Higher Education, "post secondary education will be less campus-bound and will serve persons in all age groups. Many individuals have neither the time nor resources to attend a conventional college or university. Yet, their needs for post secondary education are often at least as great as the needs of those who attend conventional colleges and universities." But who are these new students?

1. Those who cannot afford the time or cost of conventional higher education. Those previously branded "unfit" for higher education.
2. Those whose ethnic background has constrained them from full participation in the educational establishment.
3. Those whose secondary preparation has been inadequate -- the drop-out, the below-average high school graduate.

Who are these new students?

4. Those with interests and talents not served by traditional education.
5. Those whose educational progress has been interrupted by illness, military service, or other temporary conditions.
6. Those who have failed to take advantage of educational opportunity and come to regret it -- "they had their chance and muffed it."

Who are these new students?

7. Those who have become technologically unemployed and must re-tool themselves in mid-career.

8. Those on the outside who had even forgotten they wanted in.

9. Those who are elderly and found no educational opportunities present at an earlier age.

Who are these new students?

10. Those who are in prisons or hospitals or confined by illness in their homes.

11. Those who are increasingly bored with the routine of a highly technological society or faced with increased leisure time.

12. Those who must move frequently in order to accompany spouses or pursue careers.

Who are these new students?

13. Those John Locke had in mind when he said, "the people shall judge."

14. And, people like those who founded this country--people judged on performance, not on their opening handicaps.

(Adopted from the 1973 report of The Joint Committee on the California Master Plan for Higher Education.)

Fred Hechinger, writing in the New York Times, criticized American higher education for turning away from intellectual issues to concentrate on housekeeping and bookkeeping. Recent television documentaries about higher education, he noted, have handled the subject as if it concerned the rescue of bankrupt railroads. "The educational leadership--demoralized by present fiscal problems and terrified by a future of declining enrollments--lacks the spirit and the voice to draw public attention to questions of substance." Hechinger's call for a new sense of educational purpose as vital to the nation's progress is our challenge to reconstitute the community college as a community-based, performance-oriented institution, which brings me to the second approach: The creation of a different kind of college--a community renewal college.

The community college must reconstitute itself as a community-based institution

that stresses community service as the cornerstone of every curriculum -- for service and knowledge are the handmaidens of community restoration and renewal. And, by way of illustration, I would like to share with you what we propose to do in Kansas City.

For several years (prior to AACJC's adoption of its community-based, performance-oriented mission), I have been talking and writing about a concept which I have called the "Community Renewal College." The concept as originally propounded, perhaps focused too much emphasis on the community as a whole rather than the individuals who comprise it; obviously a community tends to decline, and thus be in need of renewal, only as personal obsolescence grows. Because of this, focus should be on human renewal rather than on rejuvenation of the more global entity. Whatever the case, I should like to acquaint you with some of the principles underlying our re-thinking of the Community Renewal College concept, vis-a-vis its implementation as a fourth college of our District.

A new social invention, at least in some of its aspects, The Community Renewal College would be in fact -- not just in name -- a "people's college," unconfined by any campus, decentralized and flourishing in every corner of the real world of its community. It would have as its mission helping individuals to grow and develop in a variety of ways; helping them to reach maximum employment; helping them to acquire the skills, attitudes and knowledge to restore and improve their neighborhoods; helping them to reach the enlightened judgments so critical to our society; helping them create a learning society. It might well be the only place in our communities where all of the children of all the people would meet and mix and meld. It would reach into every corner of our communities, touch every citizen, rejuvenate community pride, lift the educational achievement for all of our people and their children. And, it would serve

as a change agent for the betterment of life conditions at the local level.

With emphasis upon defined competencies and student-college educational pacts that attempt to ensure student achievement of those competencies, it would be possible to bring further education to more people than ever before and thus to validate the concept of "universal higher education." Thus it is our goal at Kansas City to develop in due course a community college without walls -- as a fourth college of the District; a Community Renewal College; a college that would exist without a formal campus; a college that would establish a network of learning sites that offer both formal and informal learning opportunities; a college that would utilize a faculty, not solely of academically credentialed individuals, but of community personnel with demonstrated expertise in their several fields of endeavor, thus making the entire community college District a laboratory for learning; a college that would emphasize multimedia, multimodal, self-instructional learning systems, free scheduled courses -- recognizing that what is learned is more important than what is taught.

As a first phase of this undertaking, we have just established a District-wide Institute of Community Services which consolidates, and will expand, all existing community services programs and activities offered independently by the District colleges. Our District which serves four counties in the metropolitan area represents regional government, and the problems associated with metropolitan grown and development are not confined to single subdivisions. Community restoration, which is at the very heart of the community services concept, requires a comprehensive and flexible approach, which is not possible when the community services functions are assigned to separate, somewhat autonomous colleges in a metropolitan area. Our new Metropolitan Institute of Community Services will be responsive to community needs which do not fit

into the traditional academic programs of the three existing colleges of the District. Needs such as these:

1. Some individuals need specific job training in order to get work.
2. Some individuals need access to specific education in order to win promotion within their existing jobs.
3. Community groups and organizations often need educational programs designed specifically to meet organizational needs.
4. Individuals seek education as a means of enriching their personal lives.

Operating as a consortium effort of the three colleges with a policy board composed of the three presidents and the chancellor, the Metropolitan Institute will utilize three types of delivery systems in meeting community needs:

1. Programs and services operated directly by the Institute.
2. Specific programs and services operated by the colleges under a contract with the Institute, with the Institute serving as broker between client and college.
3. Programs and services permanently assigned to the college, with the Institute serving as coordinator.

In all instances faculty from the three colleges will be utilized extensively under special contracts, in addition to the utilization of community personnel.

Charged with taking the college to the people, the Institute will shortly begin the discharge of its duties by establishing learning centers throughout the District in the community where the student lives -- in close proximity to his home-- where students can meet with their advisers or instructors: libraries, churches, school buildings, community centers, private homes, parks; and business, industrial, governmental, and welfare organization offices. Here, too, persons seeking non-credit learning experiences will be serviced by short courses, seminars, lecture series, film showings,

and the other vehicles with which community services have been identified in the past. The aim will not necessarily be to move attending students toward a degree, although this will be an available option. The main purpose will be to help students define their competencies -- both those they already have and those they want to develop -- as effective human beings: personally, communicatively, vocationally, and recreationally. The over-all goal will be to teach them how to learn so that, more than merely fostering a desire for lifelong learning, we may give them the tools by which to translate that desire into lifelong actuality.

Examples of Institute Programming:

1. Responding to the needs of business, industry, professions, and government in the Metropolitan Kansas City area for employee self-improvement and upgrading of skills and knowledge, the Metropolitan Institute of Community Services has launched what has the promise of becoming one of the most extensive in-plant, in-service training programs in the country. Operating under the Institute's new Career Development Services Center, the program includes an associate degree program in electronics at Western Electric for approximately 75 students; an associate degree program in nursing management at St. Luke's Hospital for 53 registered nurses; an associate degree program in heavy equipment maintenance at the Missouri Fire Academy for 62 Kansas City employees; an eight-week session in supervision at Pfizer Chemical Company for 14 supervisors. Other in-service programs will soon be operational with 18 additional agencies, including three with the city of Kansas City, Missouri in the areas of trash truck operation, secretarial, and street light maintenance. Others cover registered nursing refresher, secretarial, and nursing supervision for three area hospitals, respectively; occupational and liberal arts courses for some 1200 inmates of the Fort

Leavenworth Discipline Barracks; management and foreign affairs courses for non-commissioned officers at Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base; and credit and non-credit programs in secretarial science, drafting, insecticide certification, franchising and financial record keeping, programmed learning for small businessmen, retail sales, appraising, industrial management, familiarity with provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and banking for such diverse agencies as: telephone company, engineering firm, Federal and state groups and associations, Goodwill Industries, chemical company, and motor truck company.

2. Two Penn Valley Community College programs taken over by the Metropolitan Institute, the Career Center and Veterans programs, respectively, emphasize job training and upward mobility. People who want to work are helped to get jobs:

1. By providing personal and vocational exploration opportunities.
2. By providing career-oriented educational experience.
3. By providing occupational training.
4. By providing credentials (h. s. certificate, G.E.D.).

3. We just recently entered into a contract with the Street Academy, a non-profit bootstrap corporation formed by four inner city young men for the purpose of working with disadvantaged black youth in the Kansas City inner city, to provide counseling and administrative service. Ultimately the Street Academy will become a part of the Urban Studies Center of the new Metropolitan Institute of Community Services.

A storefront operation directed toward dropouts who lack motivation to return to school, the Street Academy now enrolls some 222 youth. Activities include "The Ghetto Workshop" (GED), "Black Moods" (creative art), "Check Yourself" (health), "Express Yourself" (black history, black culture and black awareness in game situations),

"Write On" (journalism), "Respect Yourself" (poise and grooming), "Sock It To Me" (brothers' baseball), "Black Anxiety" (creative dancing). Counseling and video tape workshops are also available.

The third way to accomplish the community-based, performance-oriented mission is through a new definition of the teaching/learning act--competency-based learning systems.

Although most community colleges today are facing new demands from new students in the marketplace, they are still attempting to meet these demands in the same old shopworn ways.

We educators, I think, get caught up in our own rhetoric. We seem to forget the fact of individual differences and that what causes one student to learn falls far short for another.

We continue to base our educational programs on the "Black Coffee Syndrome". . . What do I mean by "Black Coffee Syndrome?" In most colleges, we can find in the Student Union vending machines that offer us the choice of black coffee, coffee with sugar, coffee with cream, coffee with sugar and cream, coffee with two lumps of sugar, coffee with double cream, etc; yet when we enter the classrooms of that same college, we're all served the same black coffee. These colleges fail to recognize the principle of human diversity--so critical in the open door community college--and perhaps best illustrated by the following fable:

"Fable of the Animal School"

"Once upon a time, the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of "a new world," so they organized a

school. They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming and flying, and to make it easier to administer, all the animals took all the subjects.

The Duck was excellent in swimming (better in fact than his instructor), and made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming to practice running. This was kept up until his webbed feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school so nobody worried about that except the Duck.

The Rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The Squirrel was excellent in climbing, until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground-up instead of from the tree-top down. He also developed charlie horses from overexertion and then got C in climbing and D in running.

The Eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get ther .

At the end of the year, an abnormal Eel that could swim exceedingly well and also run, climb, and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian.

The Prairie Dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their child to a Badger and later joined the Ground Hogs and Gophers to start a successful private school."

The moral of the fable is, of course, that people are different, and any attempt to fashion all in the same mold rather than capitalizing on individual strengths and potentialities could result in overall mediocrity. Individual talents could go unrecognized, untapped, and undeveloped.

At the risk of lending credence to Robert Browning's words: "Only one speech--Brookdale," I'd like to describe briefly the development of competency-based learning systems at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey, where I served until last fall as Founding President.

Nearly six years ago, when I accepted the presidency of Brookdale Community College, I found myself in the enviable position that Chancellor McHenry of the University of California at Santa Cruz once described as an administrator's dream: when you have neither faculty nor students to worry about--only a college to build; we possessed that rare and mixed blessing of being at the beginning.

Theoretically, that meant a free hand to develop the kind of educational program which would attract more students, produce greater learning results, and provide more ways to reach the individual than had ever been possible through traditional approaches.

Therefore, at Brookdale, a concerted effort was made not only to recognize individual differences among students, but to provide instructional strategies that would accommodate the variety of learning styles reflected in those differences. Such an eclectic approach, while utilizing technological learning aids to their fullest advantage, embraced traditional modes of instruction as well.

Competency-based learning systems embodied many of the concepts that had begun to stir in the decade of the Fifties and most of those that, in the early Sixties, were starting to challenge the conventional teaching/learning theories and the organization of the self-contained classroom. An amalgam of all of these seemed necessary if the result of the planning effort were truly to be the individualization of instruction:

1. A systems approach to curriculum planning (already demonstrated by business and industry to be a successful problem-solving device).

2. Program-oriented teaching teams with differentiated staffing. (That is, teams with expertise in the area of study supplemented by subordinates equipped to perform specified functions less than teaching.)

3. Failure-free curricula. (Learning experiences that measure not the extent of student failures, but the depth of their successes.)

4. Free scheduling of classes to allow the student to pursue extensively an area of interest without interruption by having to go to an unrelated class.

5. Independent study, continuous progress curricula, the "cluster college" idea that provides for flexible grouping--to name a few.

Stated very simple, competency-based learning systems at Brookdale meant:

1. That required competencies (learning objectives) are defined in advance (job and transfer standards) for all units, courses, and programs.

2. That course and program competencies must be mastered if credit is to be given and degree awarded.

3. That a wide diversification of learning methods (modes and strategies) are utilized to cause learning. Students could learn through their eyes, through their ears, or with their hands. Two students in the same course might receive the material in different ways--from a lecture, a film strip, or by building a model, or in some cases by all three.

4. That all learning experiences must be evaluated, utilizing multiple forms, to determine whether the desired learning has occurred.

5. That the learning pace must be adjusted to needs of individual students (self pacing). Not lowering standards, rather recognize John Carroll's definition of aptitude: "Amount of time required by learner to master learning tasks."

6. That the student must assume responsibility for his learning. (Active not passive role including peer tutoring.)

7. And perhaps should be #1--that an individualized learning prescription, based on diagnosis of the student's needs, is developed for each student and continuously monitored by his student development specialist and faculty teams.

In short, Brookdale's Plan tended to emulate the Hospital Model to which institutions of higher learning have often been compared because both college and hospital are characterized by diagnosis and treatment of human needs. The chief distinction between the two types of institutions has always been that hospitals have prescribed different treatment for different patients; whereas, colleges have given all students the same lecture/textbook treatment, regardless of individual needs, explaining treatment failures largely on the basis of the student's inadequacies. This is a little like a hospital's saying that there's nothing wrong with the treatment; we just keep getting the wrong patients! Again like the hospital, Brookdale was designed to be a "drop in/drop out" institution, providing short--or long-term therapy as diagnosis indicates. This implies a new role for the teacher as a learning manager--one who plans strategies for each student which will cause him to learn.

In conclusion, the community-based, performance-oriented community college is dedicated to the proposition that human renewal--the individual upgrading of every citizen within our District--is its primary and overriding purpose; it rejects the notion that an individual's ability to accumulate credits is the ultimate measure of his worth; it fully discharges its obligation to help every member of the community to acquire the basic skills and understandings necessary to effective functioning in a world at flux; and it revitalizes

efforts to generate a sense of responsibility for the future. It is the community-based, performance-oriented community college's goal to make possible for everyone its services touch, what Alfred North Whitehead has called "the acquisition of the art of utilization of knowledge."

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